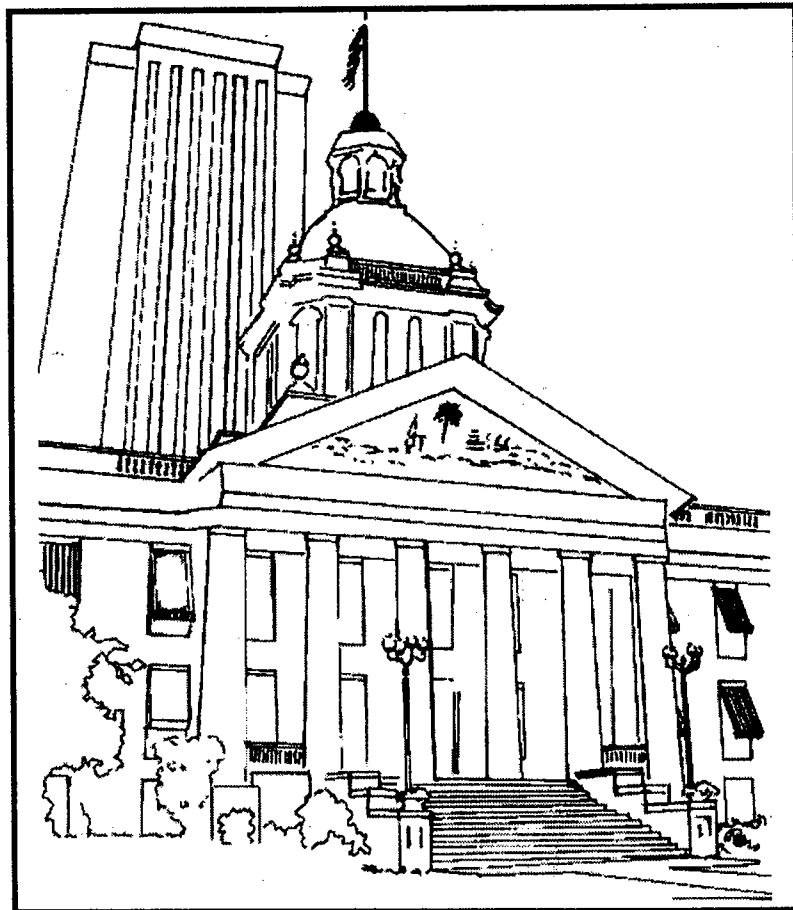
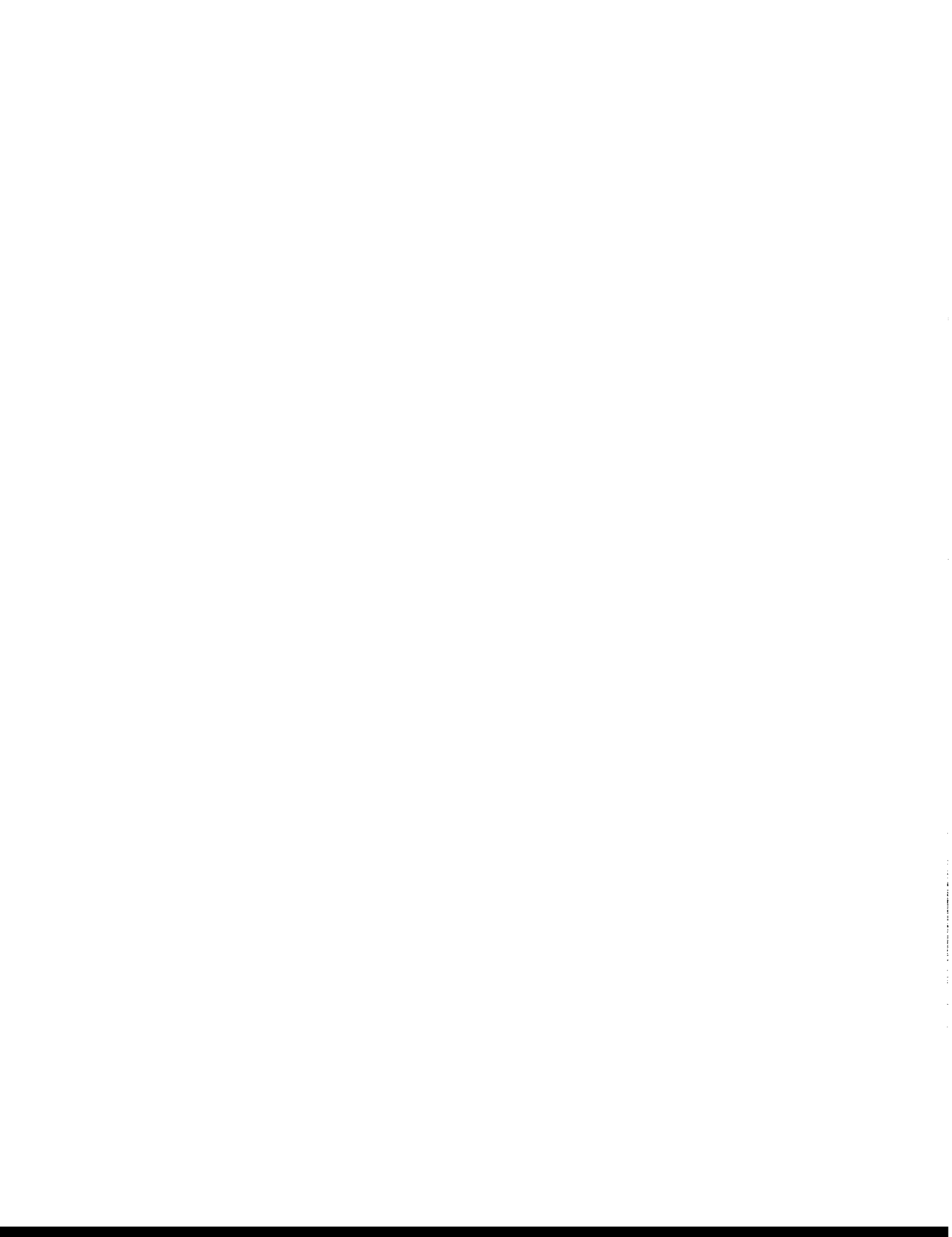


# Florida Commission on the Status of Women



**1995 Annual Report**



**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

*The Florida Commission on the Status of Women, through research, legislation, and communication, is dedicated to the elimination of all barriers to a woman's achievement of her fullest human potential.*

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The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050  
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Dear Floridian,

The Fourth Annual Report of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women addresses one of the most important and difficult issues facing our nation today: welfare reform. Poverty and welfare disproportionately affect lives of women and children. Also, poverty is among the most substantial barriers to a woman achieving her fullest human potential.

In its study of welfare and welfare reform, the Commission was impressed by the complexity of the issue. The inaccurate stereotypes about exactly who is on welfare, with how many children, and for how long were striking. We were concerned that the connections between women on welfare and divorce, domestic abuse, statutory rape, and underemployment were not always acknowledged. At our open hearing on women and welfare, women described their experiences with the welfare system. These women were not living easy lives. Most agreed they needed assistance to get off welfare. They also agreed that welfare, as it exists today, needs change, but they want people who had lived on welfare to be part of the welfare reform process.

The Commission agreed with these women and others who have studied welfare—that any successful welfare reform must consider the following: lack of quality child care, lack of transportation, potential loss of children's health insurance, and lack of education and training for the mothers. Mothers on welfare who are forced to accept minimum wage positions can be left to lose health care benefits and their children spend several hours each day unsupervised because their mothers cannot afford child care. "Fill-in-the-gap" strategies which allow women to maintain a minimum quality of life for their children and for themselves as they begin moving off public assistance and to successful, economically independent lives are imperative.

It has been said that the sign of a civilized society is how well it treats its poor. Floridians now have the opportunity to prove themselves to be truly extraordinary as welfare can be reformed in ways to **improve** the lives of all poor children and women.

Sincerely,



Navita Cummings James, Ph.D.  
Chair, Florida Commission on the Status of Women  
Associate Professor of Communication, University of South Florida

## **FCSW HISTORY**

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is established within the Office of the Attorney General, State of Florida. The Governor, Attorney General, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives each appoints three members; the Secretary of State, Comptroller, Insurance Commissioner, Commissioner of Agriculture, and Commissioner of Education each appoints two members, for a total of 22 members. Four-year terms are the normal term lengths, and no member may serve more than eight consecutive years. Appointees shall include persons who represent rural and urban interests and the ethnic and cultural diversity of the state's population.

Historically, the first Commission on the Status of Women in Florida was created by Executive Order of Governor Farris Bryant in 1964, in response to a 1963 recommendation by the President's Commission on the Status of Women that each state should form a similar commission. (The President's CSW was established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. Eleanor Roosevelt was the Chair, and Esther Peterson of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau was Vice Chair.) In 1991, legislation was filed in Florida to establish the FCSW in its present form.

As required in Florida Statutes 14.24, the Commission's mandate is to study issues affecting women and to make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet, and Legislature on those issues. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- analysis of the socioeconomic factors influencing the status of women
- development of individual potential
- encouragement of women to utilize their capabilities and to assume leadership roles
- coordination of efforts of numerous organizations interested in the welfare of women
- identification and recognition of contributions made by women to the community, state, and nation
- implementation of recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes



## **FCSW 1995 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Published the Annual Report on "Justice and Human Rights, How They Apply to Women"
- Submitted and endorsed 10 nominees to the Governor for selection of 3 individuals for induction into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame and coordinated the annual Florida Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony in November

### **Recognition Events**

- Participated in various Women's History Month programs
- Served on the Planning Committee for the nationally recognized "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" in April
- Initiated the statewide kick-off for the 75th Anniversary of Suffrage in August
- Facilitated dual news conferences in Tampa and Miami announcing the results of annual survey of the most "women friendly" companies in the State of Florida
- Participated in the Silent Witness Exhibition in conjunction with the Division of Victim Services, Office of the Attorney General

### **Public Hearing**

- Organized and conducted a public hearing on Welfare Reform in Apopka, Florida, October 28, 1995

### **Awards**

- Received the National Association of Commissions for Women 1995 Outstanding Achievement Award for FCSW's annual survey of the most "women friendly" companies in Florida

### **National and International Conferences/Conventions**

- Participated in the 1995 National Association of Commissions for Women Convention in Baltimore, Maryland
- Participated in the U.S. Southeastern Regional Conference on Women
- Represented the State of Florida at the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China (no Commission funds were used)
- Participated in the 1995 Civil Rights Conference held in Tallahassee, Florida, November 15-17, 1995
- Coordinated and facilitated a meeting on issues of importance to women with White House officials. This meeting included leaders from governmental agencies, women's organizations, women's health groups, and FCSW members and staff, along with women legislators of both political parties and minority commission leaders.

## **1995 COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

### **Karen Amlong of Fort Lauderdale**

Karen Amlong is an attorney who is Board Certified by the Florida Bar in Civil Trial practice, as well as in Marital and Family Law. She and her husband own their own law firm. She frequently litigates employment discrimination cases, including sexual harassment claims. She has lectured on the faculties of continuing legal education programs at the local, state, and national level on sexual harassment and gender bias in the court system. Karen Amlong is a former member of the Florida House of Representatives, has served on the Broward County Commission on the Status of Women, and is a former Florida State Coordinator and member of the National Board of Directors of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

### **Honorable Rosemary Barkett of Miami**

Rosemary Barkett, past Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, was Florida's first female Supreme Court Justice. She was born in Mexico of Syrian parents. A former nun and school-teacher, she served as a trial judge and an appellate judge in the state court system before being selected for the Supreme Court by then-Governor Bob Graham. She was appointed by President Clinton to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, where she now serves.

### **Conchy Bretos of Miami**

Conchy Bretos is the Legislative Representative for the American Association of Retired Persons for the State of Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Conchy Bretos served as the Director of the Dade County Commission on the Status of Women for several years.

### **Barbara Carey del Castillo of Fort Lauderdale**

Barbara Carey del Castillo is an attorney practicing administrative and government law, legislation, health care litigation, medical malpractice, and insurance law. She is a member of the Broad & Cassel law firm of Fort Lauderdale.

### **Elsie B. Crowell of Tallahassee**

Elsie Crowell has been employed by the State of Florida in various positions for more than 25 years, and is currently the Director of Consumer Services for the Department of Insurance. She is a member of Who's Who in Government Service and Leadership Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce. She has been honored as one of 100 Outstanding Black Citizens by United Negro College Fund, has served as President of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority/Tallahassee, is a board member of Goodwill Industries, and has served many other public and private organizations. Elsie Crowell served on the search committee for the president of Florida State University.

### **Karen Cunningham, Ph.D. of Tallahassee**

Karen Cunningham is an Associate Professor in the English Department of Florida State University. Her specialty is with Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama and Literature in the 16th and 17th Centuries, and she currently is working on Gender Studies and the Law in the 16th and 17th Centuries.

### **Marilyn J. Dewey of St. Petersburg**

Marilyn Dewey is a lifelong student of the human condition. If pressed, she would admit to being a sociologist. She has had a career as a small community planner, acquiring and implementing development grants primarily for Tribal Communities throughout the United States. She has worked for the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., was the NOW lobbyist for two legislative terms in Tallahassee, has been a candidate for two consecutive legislative races, and has held leadership positions with numerous groups and organizations. Marilyn Dewey is self-employed as an investor and publisher from her home in St. Petersburg.

### **Barbara Effman of Sunrise**

Barbara Effman has served as the Director of Planned Parenthood of South Florida, and she has a background in public health and business administration. She has served on the Broward Commission on the Status of Women and is a board member of the American Cancer Society. Barbara Effman helped her husband, Stephen, win the election as Mayor of Sunrise.

### **Peggy Gagnon of Satellite Beach**

Peggy Gagnon has served as a community volunteer for many years in the Brevard County area, and she currently serves on the Brevard Heart Foundation Board of Directors, Selective Service Commission Board Member, Farm Share/Sea Share Food Distribution Coordinator, and several panels at the First United Methodist Church of Melbourne. She previously served on the board of Habitat for Humanity, Art Center and Museum Board, American Heart Association Board, and the Junior League of South Brevard, Executive Committee.

### **Susan Gilbert of Miami**

Susan Gilbert has her own consulting firm in marketing and public relations. She served as Senior Vice President/Marketing for SunBank in Florida. Susan has a long history of political advocacy and public relations. She is a board member of United Way Dade, board of trustees for Baptist Hospital in Dade County, board of trustees for Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, board of trustees for Beacon Council in Miami, a member of Who's Who and Why of Successful Florida Women, and she was named Outstanding Young Woman in America in 1983, '84, and '85. She has won many awards for her advertising abilities.

### **Kate Gooderham of Fort Myers**

Kate Gooderham has her own consulting firm in Fort Myers, specializing in issues management, grassroots organizing, lobbying and monitoring, coastal permitting, and strategic planning. She is First Vice President of the National Women's Political Caucus, and is the Immediate Past President of the Florida Women's Political Caucus. She served as cochair of the National Women's Political Caucus' Site-Selection Committee, and she is a member of the National Steering Committee of NWPC. She serves as Chair of her church's Committee on the Status and Role of Women. Kate Gooderham serves as Treasurer of FCSW.

### **Susan Guber of Miami**

Susan Guber served three terms as a Florida legislator, representing House District 117 in Miami. She now serves as Vice President of Governmental Affairs for South Miami HealthSystem.

**Honorable Sally Heyman of North Miami Beach**

Sally Heyman is a Florida State Representative serving District 105 in North Miami Beach. She served as a Councilwoman in North Miami Beach for many years. She has her own consulting firm (specializing in crime/loss prevention), is a certified crime prevention practitioner, and holds an M.S. in criminal justice and juvenile delinquency. She was inducted into the Florida Bar in 1994. She is liaison to the North Miami Beach Commission on the Status of Women, chairs Public Issues for the American Cancer Society/Dade County, and is active in issues and organizations focusing on women, cancer, public safety, ADA, and politics.

**Mohinder "Mona" Jain, M.D., Ph.D. of Bradenton**

Mona Jain serves as Family Health/Disability Services Coordinator for Manatee County Head Start, and holds both M.D. and Ph.D. degrees along with four other degrees in education and science. Her affiliations include: board member of Women's Resource Center of Manatee, past Chair of Manatee Commission on the Status of Women, board member of the United Nations Association, President's Council, Life Member of the University of South Florida, Who's Who in American Education, Fulbright and National Science Foundation scholarship recipient, and holds leadership positions in many other organizations.

**Navita Cummings James, Ph.D. of Tampa**

Navita James serves as Director of African American Studies at the University of South Florida. She is an educator and served on the search committee for the University of South Florida President. Navita James represented the Commission at the U.S. Department of Labor's Southeastern Regional Beijing Preparatory Meeting and attended the United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995. Navita James is Chair of the Commission.

**Robert M. Levy of Miami**

Bob Levy has his own public and governmental relations firm, Robert M. Levy & Associates, with offices in Miami and Tallahassee. He is active in political campaigns and campaign management. Bob Levy is a veteran of the Vietnam War, where he was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts.

**Martha "Marty" Pinkston, Ed.D. of Fort Lauderdale**

Marty Pinkston is Assistant to the North Campus President at Miami Dade Community College. She is an educator and has worked in anti-poverty government programs. Her affiliations include Coalition of 100 Black Women, A.A.U.W., and National Association of Media Women.

**Mona Reis of West Palm Beach**

Mona Reis has been a strong advocate of reproductive health care and protecting a woman's right to choose for three decades. She is a single mother of two.

**Judith Byrne Riley of Valparaiso**

Judith Byrne Riley graduated Magna Cum Laude from Wheaton College and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Judith serves as a member of the Private Industry Council, is a national board member for the National Association of Private Industry Councils, and has also been a Governor's Appointee to the State Job Training Coordinating Council since 1993—presently serving as Vice Chair. In 1994, she was appointed to the Jobs and Education Partnership, a state committee under Enterprise Florida which focuses on work force development. In 1993 she was voted

"Woman of the Year" by the Emerald Coast chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Church, and in 1994 she was voted the American Business Woman's Association's "Business Associate of the Year." She is a wife and mother of five daughters.

### **Marsha Griffin Rydberg of Tampa**

Marsha Rydberg is an attorney focusing in real estate, commercial litigation, and bankruptcy law. She has been awarded an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest. She serves on the Florida Bar of Governors and was the first woman to serve as President of the Hillsborough County Bar Association. She has chaired the Tampa Downtown Partnership and is on the Board of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce. Marsha Rydberg is Vice Chair of the Commission.

### **Lisa A. Tropepe, P.E. of Coral Springs**

Lisa Tropepe is a registered engineer with experience in permitting, paving, grading and drainage plans, and the design of sanitary sewer collection and water distribution. She has developed several water management plans for Indian Trail Water Control District.

### **Laura Ward of Fort Lauderdale**

Laura Ward is Grants Administrator for the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art. She served on the Florida Arts Council for five years and is studying for her Ph.D. She has served on many historical and community boards.

### **Doris Weatherford of Seffner**

Doris Weatherford, who serves as the Commission's historian, is an author whose works include *Foreign and Female: Immigrant Women in America*, which was reissued in an expanded edition this year. Among her other books are *American Women and World War II*, which is being translated into Japanese, and *American Women's History: An A to Z of People, Organizations, Issues, and Events*, which was published by Prentice Hall in 1994. She also has many years of experience as a political consultant.

### **Judy Wilson, Ph.D. of Ocala**

Dr. Judy Wilson is a psychotherapist who specializes in survivors of physical and sexual abuse. She is the Executive Director and original founder of the 18-year-old Ocala Rape Crisis-Spouse Abuse Center. Her expertise includes expert witnessing in sexual battery and battered women trials. She has a private counseling practice for victims, offenders, and other types of mental health problems. She also serves as an adjunct professor at Central Florida Community College in Women's Studies and for law enforcement training.

### **Susan D. Wilson of Alachua**

Susan Wilson served several terms as Treasurer of the Florida AFL-CIO (the first female to do so), managing a \$1 million annual budget. She is actively involved in state politics, and she is experienced in labor/management relations. She has taught "Personal Empowerment" Courses for women and is interested in health care issues. Susan was selected for the Civil Rights Advocacy Award in Business and Industry by the Florida Commission on Human Relations in 1993. She currently serves as the Commission Secretary. Susan recently built an eco-friendly house, and she has studied environmentally sustainable building and development.

### **Karen Woodall of Tallahassee**

Karen Woodall is a legislative consultant with her own consulting firm, Woodall and Associates,

with clients including farm workers, AFDC recipients, social workers, and homeless and housing advocates. She is experienced in poverty-related, health care, and budget issues. She has served on many state task forces dealing with children, homeless, tax reform, and other social issues, including the Health and Human Services Board for HRS.

**Sandi Beare/Executive Director of Tallahassee**

Sandi Beare has been an advocate of women's rights since her teens. She has long worked in public relations, public and governmental affairs, media interaction, and legislative advocacy, and she has non-traditional experience in international trade and international affairs. She has produced a 12-part television series about the Miami River, written for magazines and newspapers, and is affiliated with many environmental and civil rights organizations.

**Michele Manning/Administrative Assistant of Tallahassee**

Michele Manning has worked with state government for many years. She serves as office manager of the Commission. She has completed the Certified Public Manager program with the State of Florida. She is the mother of three children.

\*Term expirations and/or vacancy occurrences resulted in not more than 22 commission members at any one time during 1995.

# FLORIDA WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

**1982**

Mary McCleod Bethune\*  
Helene S. Coleman  
Elaine Gordon  
Wilhelmina Celeste Goehring Harvey  
Paula Mae Milton\*  
Barbara Jo Palmer

**1984**

Roxcy Bolton  
Barbara Landstreet Frye\*  
Lena B. Smithers Hughes\*  
Zora Neale Hurston\*  
Sybil Collins Mobley  
Helen Lennehan Muir  
Gladys Pumariega Soler\*  
Julia DeForest Sturtevant Tuttle\*

**1986**

Annie Ackerman\*  
Rosemary Barkett  
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry\*  
Dorothy Dodd\*  
Marjory Stoneman Douglas  
Elsie Jones Hare\*  
Elizabeth McCullough Johnson\*  
Francis Bartlett Kinne  
Arva Jeane Moore Parks  
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings\*  
Florence Barbara Seibert\*  
Marilyn K. Smith\*  
Eartha Mary Magdalene White\*

**1992**

Jacqueline Cochran\*  
Carrie P. Meek  
Ruth Bryan Owen\*

**1993**

Betty Skelton Frankman  
Paulina Pedroso\*  
Janet Reno

**1994**

Nikki Beare  
Gladys D. Milton  
Betty Mae Jumper

**1995**

Evelyn Stocking Crosslin\*  
JoAnn Hardin Morgan  
Sarah "Aunt Frances" Brooks Pryor\*

Nominations may be made to the Florida Women's Hall of Fame by sending a nomination to:

Florida Commission on the Status of Women  
Office of the Attorney General  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050

Nominations annually open on April 15 and close on July 15. Call (904) 413-3021 to request a nomination form.

\* deceased



# 1995 COMMISSION COMMITTEE LIST

## **Annual Report Committee**

Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Chair  
Elsie Crowell  
Barbara Effman  
Susan Gilbert  
Kate Gooderham  
Mona Jain  
Navita Cummings James  
Bob Levy  
Judy Byrne Riley  
Laura Ward  
Doris Weatherford  
Judy Wilson  
Susan Wilson  
Karen Woodall

## **Bylaws**

Marsha Griffin Rydberg

## **Communications**

Conchy Bretos, Chair  
Karen Cunningham  
Susan Gilbert  
Navita Cummings James  
Judy Byrne Riley

## **Education**

Laura Ward, Chair  
Mona Jain  
Navita Cummings James

## **Employment**

Judy Byrne Riley, Chair  
Susan Gilbert  
Mona Jain

## **Employment Survey Subcommittee**

Susan Gilbert, Chair  
Mona Jain  
Judy Byrne Riley

**Executive Committee**

Navita Cummings James, Chair  
Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Vice Chair  
Susan Wilson, Secretary  
Kate Gooderham, Treasurer  
Susan Gilbert, Member at Large  
Bob Levy, Member at Large  
Doris Weatherford, Historian  
Elsie Crowell, Immediate Past Chair

**Family**

Barbara Effman, Chair  
Karen Amlong  
Sally Heyman  
Mona Reis  
Judy Wilson

**Finance/Budget**

Kate Gooderham, Chair  
Marsha Griffin Rydberg  
Lisa Tropepe

**Health Care**

Elsie Crowell, Chair  
Conchy Bretos  
Barbara Effman  
Mona Jain  
Mona Reis

**Internship Program**

Elsie Crowell, Coordinator

**Legislative**

Bob Levy, Chair  
Karen Amlong  
Susan Gilbert  
Kate Gooderham  
Sally Heyman  
Marsha Griffin Rydberg

**Nominating**

Elsie Crowell, Chair  
Mona Jain  
Bob Levy  
Judy Byrne Riley  
Karen Woodall

**Resources**

Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Chair  
Navita Cummings James  
Judy Wilson

**Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History**

Doris Weatherford, Chair  
Conchy Bretos  
Elsie Crowell  
Karen Woodall

**Welfare Reform Task Force**

Susan Wilson, Chair  
Mona Jain  
Mona Reis  
Judy Byrne Riley  
Marsha Griffin Rydberg  
Laura Ward  
Karen Woodall

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### **Communications Committee—Conchy Bretos, Chair**

The Communications Committee has met several times to establish goals for the 1996 funding cycle and a plan of action to successfully meet these goals. At the onset, the committee decided to survey the needs of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women members and their priorities, given funding restrictions. The results of the survey indicate that the main priorities should deal with effective communications with external entities, i.e., media, other institutions, women's organizations, and the community at large. In order to achieve this goal, the committee has started work on the following projects:

- development of press kits to distribute to the media, explaining the work of the Commission and including news releases about particular events as needed
- development of presentation kits to be used by Commission members when doing presentations, including sample position papers and speeches
- researching a publication that will compile data on Florida women, to be published and distributed to interested parties working on women's projects

At the present time, the Committee is seeking an intern to assist with these and other year-long projects.

### **Education Committee—Laura Ward, Chair**

Following up on proposals from the Commission, the Education Committee began a process to involve students and women's organizations in Commission interests utilizing the Internet. In July 1995, Executive Director Sandi Beare met with Education Commissioner Frank Brogan to discuss the best ways to reach students in Florida. Commissioner Brogan offered his department's assistance in identifying various ways to disseminate information. He provided videotaping for the August 22 news conference, which brought together the Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller, and Education Commissioner with FCSW members and staff to speak about women winning the right to vote in 1920.

### **Employment Committee—Judy Byrne Riley, Chair** **Employment Survey Subcommittee—Susan Gilbert, Chair**

The Employment Committee of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women focused its main efforts again this year on the "Women in the Workplace" employment survey, distributing it to over 700 of the largest employers in the state.

Barnett Banks, Inc., a Jacksonville-based statewide banking system with 83 percent of its employees women, scored the highest in the poll, followed closely by Ryder System, a transportation company based in Miami. The other top ten employers, in order, are: Baptist Hospital/Miami, with 65 percent of its employees female; *The Miami Herald*, also a winner in the 1993-1994 survey; Bayfront Medical Center/St. Petersburg, whose majority of upper management is female; *The St. Petersburg Times*, whose General Manager is female; AvMed/Santa Fe/Gainesville, the largest not-for-profit health care company in the state; University of Central Florida/Orlando, with leading-edge programs in diversity; Tachachale Florida State Development Services Institution/Gainesville, a company strong in promoting women from within; and Florida's

Department of Environmental Protection/Tallahassee, a state agency with a reputation for its family-friendly programs.

The companies were graded on their initiatives in providing women- and family-friendly policies in such areas as child care, management training, flex-time, job sharing, and diversity initiatives. Examples of the winning programs included mentoring within the company, leadership programs, a clear goal in placing and increasing the number of women in executive positions, child care centers and resources, reimbursement for child care while traveling, after-school programs, and elder care resources.

The number of companies queried was double the number from the previous year, and the percentage of returned surveys was also twice last year's number. The tabulated results were carefully scrutinized and one-on-one follow-up interviews were conducted with each of the top 30 finalist companies.

The survey resulted in publicity throughout the nation and in Canada, garnering the Commission well-deserved recognition. In July, FCSW was given the prestigious *1995 Outstanding Achievement Award* by the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) for this survey. Other Commissions on the Status of Women throughout the nation have contacted FCSW for information on replicating the effort in other states, and several Florida companies have asked for information on successful corporate programs to emulate.

The committee's 1995 work also included efforts on the Annual Report on Welfare Reform with special emphasis on job-training programs and their changes within the state and federal agenda. Members of the committee also participated in the annual Civil Rights Conference, held in Tallahassee in November. Committee members presented a plenary panel discussion on job-training changes and welfare reform as applied to employment issues.

The 1995-1996 "Women in the Workplace" Survey of Florida's largest employers was distributed to 1000 companies and agencies from both the public and private sector in March 1996 with a special focus on pay equity.

#### **Health Care Committee—Elsie B. Crowell, Chair**

The main goals of the 1995-1996 Health Care Committee are to follow up on the Commission's 1993 Health Care Report and determine significant changes in women's health care issues in Florida. This goal is accomplished by looking at key health care issues facing women in Florida as compared with national issues and by providing the public with an updated review.

The concept of working with various organizations and expanding the expertise of the committee beyond the Commission worked extremely well. In addition, a separate document will be available for distribution to organizations and individuals outlining significant health care issues as an educational tool for public forums and health care workshops. Consequently, the details of committee findings will not be discussed in this committee report.

The health care document will also provide a status report of the 1992-1993 recommendations, which will reflect favorable progress since the Commission identified health care for women as a priority within its structure.

It is important to note that data collection is still an area that requires attention in order to provide the most helpful information to the public.

Gratitude and thanks are extended to the following individuals, who provided the time and expertise necessary to produce a final document for the Commission:

Dr. Mona Jain, FCSW Commissioner  
Ms. Conchy Bretos, FCSW Commissioner  
Dr. Karen Cunningham, FCSW Commissioner  
Ms. Le Whitney, HRS Office of Women's Health  
Dr. Marian Limacher, Cardiologist and Principal Investigator—NIH Women's Health Initiative, University of Florida  
Dr. Marianna Baum, Principal Investigator—NIH Women's Health Initiative, University of Miami  
Mr. Lou Comer, Department of Elder Affairs  
Ms. Lottie Brown, Insurance Administrator—Florida Department of Insurance, Ft. Lauderdale Service Office

#### **Internship Program—Elsie B. Crowell, Coordinator**

The Commission was very fortunate to have five interns this year. Interviews were conducted during the early part of the fall semester, and the following individuals were selected.

- Carrie D. Massey, a senior majoring in English Literature/Women's Studies at Florida State University, did extensive research on the Child Support Enforcement Program in Florida. Her topic was a component of the Welfare Reform Report for the Commission. Carrie took her subject very seriously and spent time visiting and interviewing individuals who worked directly with the program, as well as a client who benefited from the program.
- Nicole Coffin, a junior majoring in Theater/Women's Studies at Florida State University, researched the topic of Women in the Media from a political point of view. This report pointed out the need for additional research in this area as the Commission continues to look at not only what is available but also other topics that require additional research and writings.
- Carla Swickerath, a senior majoring in English/Art History at the University of Florida, researched the topic of Florida Women and the Arts. She found that there is a void in terms of information and possible due credit given to women who contributed much to the arts. Carla graduated in December 1995.
- Kimberly Eckert, a senior majoring in English/Women's Studies at the University of Florida, wrote on Domestic Violence cases (restraining orders) within the Gainesville circuit court district. Kimberly attended the statewide domestic violence conference and is keenly interested in reducing the number of domestic violence cases in Florida. She also volunteered her services at a local shelter and plans to enroll in law school this fall.
- Jennifer Ashley, a junior majoring in English/Women's Studies at the University of Florida, is continuing her research for the winter semester. She is looking at comparable salaries, positions, and tenure of women in the university system of Florida.

Each of the interns joined the Commission at the Annual Florida Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony held in the Capitol in November 1995.

### **Resources Committee—Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Chair**

The Resources Committee has continued its policy of recommending for appointment qualified persons who are sensitive to women's issues. Recommendations are made after a "short list" of candidates for these positions has been selected. In addition, the Resources Committee attempts to encourage women to seek appointment to key state, local, and national committees and boards which can impact society in positive ways.

In 1995, the Resources Committee made the following five recommendations for appointment, General Master Sharon Zeller, Judge Kathleen Kearney, Karen Coolman Amlong, Judge Cynthia Ellis, and Judge Sherra Winesett. The primary area for continuing effort is publicizing the availability of this advocacy group so that its effectiveness can be maximized.

### **Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committee—Doris Weatherford, Chair**

The highlight of 1995 was the 75th Anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment, which assured women of the right to vote in all elections regardless of the state in which they lived, met the Constitution's requirement of approval by 2/3 of both houses of Congress and 3/4 of the state legislatures when Tennessee passed it—by one vote—on August 26, 1920. Although Florida was the only state in the nation that took no action on the amendment at the relevant time, everyone was eager to celebrate the anniversary 75 years later. The Commission scheduled a news conference for the occasion on August 22, 1995, to kick off statewide celebrations. This gave journalists several days to prepare their stories for the 26th. We were pleased to discover that most Cabinet members very much wanted to be part of the event, and each contributed insightful comments. The Commission's main purpose in calling the press conference was to release a paper done by one of our interns, Florida State University student Cherri Stratton, on the suffrage movement in Florida.

Nomination forms for the Florida Women's Hall of Fame were circulated throughout the summer, and once again more than 50 highly qualified nominations were sent in from all parts of the state. In September, the Committee narrowed this to the ten that the law mandates for forwarding to the Governor, and in November, Governor Chiles' three choices were inducted. The ceremony was held at the Hall Wall in the Capitol Rotunda—which was dedicated August 26, 1994—rather than at the Governor's Mansion as had been the case in the past. Over a hundred people attended, most of whom seemed to enjoy having the event at the Hall Wall, where they could conveniently view the photos and biographies of previous inductees.

The three added to the Florida Women's Hall of Fame in 1995 are:

- Dr. Evelyn Stocking Crosslin (1919–1991), who served the poor of Volusia County as a physician for nearly a half-century
- JoAnn Hardin Morgan (1940– ), the first woman to hold a senior managerial position at the Kennedy Space Center
- Sarah Frances Brooks Pryor (1877–1972), a Panhandle businesswoman and civic leader who was postmaster of Fort Walton Beach from 1917 to 1943

JoAnn Morgan attended the event, and the families of the two deceased women, many of whom were from out of state, also came.

Attorney General Bob Butterworth, in whose office FCSW resides, has generously included information about the Commission and the Florida Women's Hall of Fame on his home page, which is <http://legal.firn.edu/units/fcsw/>.

Finally, we would like to bring your attention to a publication issued this year by the Florida Humanities Council in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of suffrage. Much of its information has never been published in modern times, and it gives a great deal of useful background on the growth of women's rights in Florida.



# **WELFARE REFORM IN FLORIDA**

Dear Floridian:

**Aid to Families with Dependent Children— “welfare”—was developed to serve as a safety net that catches single-mother families. There are many different faces of “welfare mothers.” Almost half use welfare as a source of unemployment benefits between jobs or when they first enter the labor market; one-fifth work at such low-wage jobs that they continue to qualify for welfare, and nearly one-fifth use welfare as temporary disability insurance.**

Any legitimate discussion of welfare reform has to take into account what is known as the “feminization of poverty.” In an article entitled, “Welfare Is Not for Women: Why the War on Poverty Cannot Conquer the Feminization of Poverty,” Diana Pearce stated:

*“Whether as widows, divorcees, or unmarried mothers, women have always experienced more poverty than men. But in the last two decades, families maintained by women alone have increased from 36 percent to 53 percent of all poor families. There are now more than 3.6 million families maintained by women alone whose income is below the poverty level.*

*“The relative economic status of families maintained by women alone also has declined, with the average income of women-maintained families falling from 51 percent to 46 percent of that of the average male-headed family. Once poor, the woman-maintained family is more likely to stay poor, ten times more likely by one estimate.”*

The article further states:

*“While many women are poor for some of the same reasons that men are poor—they live in a job-poor area, they lack the necessary skills or education—much of women’s poverty is due to two causes that are basically unique to females. Women often must provide all or most of the support for their children, and they are disadvantaged in the labor market.”*

Several compelling facts should be considered.

- ❑ Family income and living standards have suffered in general as workers’ earnings have decreased. Census figures covering families at all income levels show that, even adjusted for inflation, the median family income has not risen between 1979 and 1994.
- ❑ Women’s pay is vital to support their families, but they still earn nearly 30 percent less than men. For example, in 1995, female managers earned 31.6% less than male managers, female retail and personal services sales workers earned 30.7% less than their male coworkers, and female administrative support and clerical workers earned 21.5% less than their male coworkers.
- ❑ In the 1960s and 70s, the annual income of a full-time, minimum-wage worker would lift a family of three out of poverty. In 1995, a family supported by a minimum-wage income of \$4.25 per hour would earn only \$8,840 a year, which is 27 percent below the poverty level for a family of three. Women make up more than 60 percent of minimum-wage workers.


There is universal agreement that the current welfare system needs to change; however, much of the current debate on the state and national levels centers around cutting budgets and cutting women and their children out of the system, rather than on enabling them to get out and stay out of poverty. Successful welfare reform cannot be achieved unless the following issues also are addressed:

- mothers must have access to safe, affordable child care
- transportation must be available for women to join the labor force
- health insurance coverage must be available
- women must be able to obtain living wages that enable them to move out of poverty

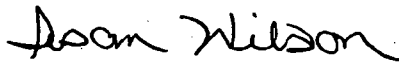
The Commission endorses the conclusion drawn in the article by Diana Pearce:

*"Developing and advocating agendas by, for, and with poor women that are built around a recognition of interdependence, the value and importance of women's work to society, and the institutional character of gender discrimination is essential. It is especially crucial in a time of attack and retrenchment to have vision of alternative sets of institutions, programs, and policies that would bring about economic justice for women. Only with a vision can much less major actions be seen as meaningful, no matter how small; only with a vision and a set of principles to guide choices can we decide which small steps to take; only with a vision can welfare and all social policy be made into a system that is controlled by and for women. And with such a vision, it is possible to design a 'War on Poverty,' and a welfare system, that instead of institutionalizing and perpetuating women's poverty, begins the process of dismantling and reversing the feminization of poverty."*

Sincerely,



Karen Woodall  
Co-Chair  
Welfare Reform Task Force



Susan Wilson  
Co-Chair  
Welfare Reform Task Force

## **A HISTORY OF WELFARE IN AMERICA BY DORIS WEATHERFORD, HISTORIAN**

Most of us learned our high school history in the days when that subject was limited to its military and political aspects, with the result that few Americans understand much about social history, especially on such issues as the history of the family or of public social welfare policy. The result is that most of us think that the "welfare state" is a new and negative situation, which began only in our downwardly drifting modern times. This is a myth promoted by many self-serving politicians, and nothing could be further from the historical truth.

Colonial governments considered societal welfare to be of such overriding importance that they interfered in personal and family life in many ways that would outrage most of us today. In the earliest southern settlements, for example, tobacco was such a lucrative cash crop that people were tempted to plant nothing else, with the result that they starved when the tobacco crop failed or when the food supply proved insufficient. Governments in Virginia and Maryland responded to this poor personal decision making by requiring every family to grow a garden—an intrusion into family business that would be condemned as intolerable "big government" today.

If such foresightedness nevertheless failed and people were needy, American governments from colonial times onward have assumed the obligation of caring for the poor. Concern for widows and orphans, the sick, and the indigent fill the pages of legislative journals, court actions, and all matter of historical records. Far from being unknown, welfare cases were comparable to those of today—and at some places and times, far greater. The lack of employment opportunities for women and the lack of life and health insurance meant that if disaster struck a community, a large proportion of its population might be on welfare for years. In coastal towns, for instance, when a ship failed to return from sea, the sailors' families—perhaps the town's majority—were left destitute.

Colonial courts also routinely took over the custody of neglected children (or even those they suspected could not be adequately cared for by an impoverished widow), placing the children into foster homes where they would be turned into productive citizens. Though this was called "binding out" or "placing out" or even apprenticeship, the result was to remove a child from his or her family and put him or her into a situation that the court deemed better—under supervision from those we now call "bureaucrats."

By the early 20th century, more and more governments were instituting cash assistance plans designed to encourage women to keep their children together in the home, rather than placing them in orphanages. Because the public also believed that women should not work outside of the home, there was no choice except to recognize motherhood as an occupation worthy of at least some societal compensation. A number of states instituted "mother's pensions"—a bit of nomenclature that still sounds vastly preferable to "welfare," "the dole," or other denigrating terms.

Sometimes aid to destitute families took the form of direct disbursement of food, coal, and similar necessities, but agencies eventually realized that for both themselves and for the families they served, cash assistance was usually more sensible. During the Great Depression, for example, governments found that it was simply wasteful to give American foods to some immigrants: Even

though most Italian families had immigrated two decades earlier, for instance, they still found American breakfast cereals an alien food that they could not stomach.

What changed during the Great Depression of the thirties—and what actually bothers most people now, though they seldom realize it—is that the rules of welfare were rewritten from whimsicality to uniformity. Until the New Deal, benefits from local governments often depended on how the grantor felt about the grantee, for “relief” was largely based on personal connections. Nor was this true only in small towns where people knew each other, for in the great immigrant cities of the North, political bosses handed out jobs or food or coal or cash only in exchange for votes.

In the South, there was always far less government money expended in black communities than in white ones; until fairly recently, African-Americans—often women—raised their own money for even such basics as schools and hospitals. Any available welfare funds automatically went to whites prior to blacks, and those blacks who did receive something usually had to have a white connection to power. One of Tampa’s most progressive, early 20th-century mayors, for instance, had no hesitation about expending the city’s (always very limited) funds only on those whom he termed “good Negroes.” He went on to write of the specific women he had in mind. Not surprisingly, they were those who cooked and cleaned for him and his friends.

These men, who had run their local governments without any checks and balances for decades, greatly resented the New Deal’s insistence that the same standards be applied to everyone. The power to discriminate was key to their high status; everyone, and especially dependent women, sought to please such men. To remove their power to play favorites was a genuine emasculation, and this loss of authority is an unacknowledged explosive factor in today’s welfare debate.

As a nation, we have actually made progress. We have ended a system that was based on political patronage and personal favor, replacing it with one that uses even-handed standards. But instead of acknowledging this progress and working to further refine fairness to do the most good with societal dollars, many political commentators concentrate instead on rewriting history to make it appear that government was never intended to intervene on behalf of its needy citizens.

And yet, the privileged men who wrote the Preamble to the United States Constitution in 1789 listed “to promote the general welfare” as one of just six goals for the federal government. As we debate what to do about today’s genuinely profound problems of poverty, we would do well to remember that the Founding Fathers considered “the general welfare” to be one of the highest priorities of their idealistic new nation.

## **WORDS FROM THE EXPERTS: CURRENT AND FORMER RECIPIENTS**

People on welfare are not a mass of impersonal, unidentifiable statistics. They are people. Individuals. Often their life circumstances are similar, but they are not cookie-cutter versions of each other. Their individual life challenges and needs yield different scenarios that must be addressed personally and specifically.

Until consideration of these differences becomes the core of welfare reform, freedom from poverty and welfare cannot be attained. Intensive consideration and assistance on a case-by-case basis is the realistic and practical approach to ending welfare as we know it.

Through personal testimony at public hearings around the state, welfare recipients mapped the tangled path of the welfare system for workers and recipients—a virtual obstacle course that sabotages the quest for liberation from poverty. Often, the problems come from misinterpretations, ignorance, and/or failure to comply with laws and procedures.

This is a composite of mothers of welfare. Theirs are the voices that are rarely heard and, even more rarely, understood.



Mary is a welfare mother. Her six-year-old son is sick. He is covered by Medicaid. But she has no transportation to get her son to the doctor. Access to transportation differs from area to area. Transportation is not provided in Mary's area, and her doctor's office is not on a public transportation line. Mary has the chance to buy a \$1,500 car for \$250 from a family member who is too elderly to drive anymore. But if she owns a car worth \$1,500 or more, she may become ineligible for food stamps.

If there were a van available to Mary, she would have another problem. Mary has another child, a daughter age four. She cannot bring her daughter on the van because only children with appointments to see the doctor can ride on the van.

Mary's 16-year-old daughter cannot take her sick brother on the van to see the doctor because minors must be accompanied by an adult unless the minor is the parent of the sick child.

One week later, Mary gets sick. Mary does not have to worry about the van or transportation because she will not be going to the doctor. Only her children are covered by Medicaid, and she has no insurance.



Charlotte is a welfare mother. She lives in unsubsidized low-income housing. The rent was just raised, but her wages were not. Even though she has a job, she receives no benefits or child care.

Charlotte has to take the van to Orlando so that her child who receives Medicaid can get the treatment she needs. She spends the entire day waiting in Orlando because the van will not take her back to her job and then return to pick up the child.

She works at a government subsidized child care center. As it is, she has not been able to count on working full-time, and now the agency is facing budget cuts. She worries that she will lose her job because of work missed while waiting in Orlando.

Charlotte wants to get the education and training she needs in order to get a better job. This will take time because she must continue to work while she is in school. She worries about the proposed two-year limit for welfare receipts because she knows she cannot possibly finish school and find a job in two years.



Sharon is a welfare mother. After months of searching she finally landed a job. But she lost her health care and child care benefits because she has a job—even though her low-paying job has no benefits and her wages won't cover the cost of the health care and child care. Before she was employed she received a check for \$303 and Medicaid. After she began to work, the check was cut to \$78. The "Fill the Gap" program that makes up the difference between wages earned and benefits lost is not available in Florida. But even if it was, all the other elements must be in place—day care, transportation, health care, etc., before she would realize any real progress.

She cannot continue to work without child care. But even if she could, she considers it negligence to deprive her children of health care. So under a system that penalizes her for working, she is forced to quit her job in order to protect her children.

Sharon has always been fearful of HRS's authority to take her children. In essence, if she works, she is unable to provide her children with the most rudimentary necessities in life. But if she accepted twice the wages to clerk at the neighborhood adult bookstore, she would be afraid that HRS might take her children. Sharon does not know that it is illegal to remove a child for this reason—or for poverty.



Clare is a welfare mother. She can stretch her food stamps to provide meals for her family, but she can't buy toothpaste, cleaning supplies, clothing, or other necessary taxable items. She wonders why authorized food stamp purchases cannot be expanded to cover these absolute essentials. She doesn't even ask for an increase, just the ability to use the stamps she is already getting to pay for these items.



Margaret is working toward her GED but she cannot get any cash assistance for her children because she lives with her parents. Her father only makes minimum wage and the family is financially stretched. She is involved in Project Independence, but she gets no child care or

transportation because she is a volunteer participant. People with children under the age of three are not required to participate. Only people who are required to participate in Project Independence are guaranteed child care and transportation.

After graduation she will face other needs—higher level training and education for a better paying professional job or better pay and benefits if she decides to take one of the many service jobs on which our society so greatly depends.



Maria is a welfare mother. She has a special needs child, but there is no treatment for such children in her community. She wonders why the jobs programs do not train people to care for special needs children. This would be a double return—jobs created and care provided.

In order to continue to qualify for assistance, she is required to return for repeated interviews and reports—even when there is no change in her situation.



Rebecca never dreamed that her GED would serve as notice of eviction of her child from the Healthy Start/Even Start program. How can she work if she doesn't have child care? She tries to make some sense of the system. Many young mothers get child care while they are in high school, but what are they to do when they are ready for a job?



Sharon is a minor living with her father. He provides shelter, but she cannot get benefits because eligibility is based on household income. Her father provides only shelter. He has no money for her or her child.



**People living in poverty are struggling to find the road out, but the road does not lead to the ultimate destination, self-sufficiency. The current system and proposed reforms are myopically focused on cutting costs. All people and situations are treated as if they were identical, but experience confirms that effective strategies must be flexible to deal with the diversity of human conditions. Put another way, all people may be created equal, but they are not the same. If the focus were shifted to the goal of getting individual people off welfare, the goal might be attained.**



## CURRENT WELFARE PROGRAMS IN FLORIDA

In order to effectively participate in the current debate on welfare reform it is important to understand what programs are under scrutiny for change. It is equally important to understand the demographics of the current economic situation; otherwise, it is difficult to keep the discussion in perspective.

As of 1995, there were three major "welfare" programs in Florida: the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC), Project Independence (P.I.), and the Family Transition Program (FTP). AFDC is the primary program, with Project Independence and the Family Assistance Program providing alternatives to the basic design of AFDC.

**Aid to Families with Dependent Children**, the basic AFDC program, provides cash assistance to families with children who are deprived of the care and support of one or both parents. Both state and federal taxes fund the AFDC program, with Florida responsible for about 45 percent of the costs. To be eligible, a child must be deprived of support or care from one or both parents due to death, incapacity, unemployment, or continued absence. The child must be under 18 years of age, never married, a resident of Florida, and have limited income and assets.

Both the income limit (called the Need Standard) and the maximum amount of cash assistance an eligible family is entitled to receive (called the Payment Standard) vary according to family size. Although much of the AFDC program is federally proscribed, the Florida Legislature establishes the need and payment standards.

<b>AFDC Payment Level History</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Max Payment Family of Three</b>	<b>% Change</b>
July 1979	194	
Feb 1982	208	7.22
Feb 1983	222	6.73
Sept 1983	231	4.05
Dec 1984	240	3.90
Jan 1986	252	5.00
Jan 1987	264	4.76
Jan 1988	275	4.17
Jan 1989	287	4.36
Jan 1990	294	2.44
Jan 1991	303	3.06
Jan 1992	303	0.00
Jan 1993	303	0.00
Jan 1994	303	0.00

### AFDC Payment Level Information

- The maximum payment level for a family of three increased 56% from July of 1979 to January of 1991. There has been no increase since then.
- Florida ranks 38th among all states in the maximum AFDC payment which a family may receive.
- The maximum AFDC payment for a parent with two children and no income is \$303 per month. This amount decreases in proportion to the amount of income available to the family.
- In FY 1994-95, the average grant per person will be approximately \$95 per month.

<b>Aid to Families with Dependent Children Eligibility and Payment (Family of 3)</b>				
<b>Yearly Income</b>	<b>Standard Deduction</b>	<b>Adjusted Income</b>	<b>Monthly AFDC Payment</b>	<b>Yearly AFDC Payment</b>
0	0	0	303	3,636
2,000	1,502	498	262	3,138
4,000	1,724	2,276	113	1,360
6,000	1,947	4,053	49	588
8,000	2,169	5,831	0	0
10,000	2,391	7,609	0	0

<b>AFDC Payment Level Compared to Poverty Level January 1, 1994</b>			
<b>Family</b>	<b>Current Payment Level</b>	<b>Poverty Level</b>	<b>% of Poverty Level</b>
1	180	581	31.0%
2	241	786	30.7%
3	303	991	30.6%
4	364	1,196	30.4%
5	426	1,401	30.4%
6	487	1,606	30.3%
7	549	1,811	30.3%
8	610	2,016	30.3%
9	671	2,221	30.2%
10	733	2,426	30.2%
Over 10	Add \$62	Add \$205	(Per Person)

Average Length of Time in the AFDC Program	
Time in Program	% of Total
0-6 Months	29.0
7-12 Months	19.4
13-24 Months	20.9
25-36 Months	15.6
More than 36 Months	15.1
Total:	100

A report issued by Florida TaxWatch, Inc. used the following illustrations to show who is eligible and for how much under Florida law. According to their report, "the actual process is considerably more complicated, but is simplified for illustration purposes."

- **First illustration.** Consider an unemployed single mother with two dependent children with no existing income, has assets under \$1,000 and has a shelter-related expense. This family is entitled to receive the maximum payment standard of \$303 per month in AFDC financial assistance.
- **Second illustration.** Consider a single mother with two dependent children who has a full-time job that pays minimum wage. A portion of the mother's income will go to pay for child care for one child at a cost of \$300 per month. This family is eligible to receive AFDC in the amount of \$124, but only for the first four months. In the fifth month this family would become ineligible for AFDC but could continue to receive Medicaid and state subsidized child care for another 12 months.

The second example illustrates a key dilemma in efforts to affect reductions in the AFDC caseloads through employment and training initiatives. Namely, the level of financial incentives necessary to eliminate families from AFDC typically are greater than the employment market allows for AFDC women qualified only as under- or unskilled and under-educated laborers. **Minimum wage jobs are simply not sufficient incentives for people to leave and remain off public assistance, especially when we consider that such jobs generally have no health insurance coverage.**

The financial incentive barrier is further evident when we include the associated benefits that AFDC families receive. These hypothetical families used for the illustrations also are likely to qualify for food stamps: currently, almost 82 percent of the AFDC caseload also receives food stamps. An AFDC household of three with no income is entitled to receive another \$295 in food stamp coupons per month. Because the family is eligible for AFDC, all members are also automatically eligible through entitlement provisions in the Social Security Act for Medicaid, the nation's health insurance program for the disabled and poor.

**How high do the mother's wages need to be to immediately disqualify the hypothetical family discussed earlier from receiving any AFDC benefits?** If she took a job paying \$5.50 an hour, she would no longer be eligible for AFDC and would lose her Medicaid coverage and state subsidized child care after one year.

**However, the better question is—if the mother’s job provides no health insurance and the value of food stamps and state subsidized child care are considered, what must her wages be to exceed the family’s standard of living on public assistance?** She would need to earn \$1,333 per month, which amounts to an hourly wage of \$8.33. (Calculated as follows: \$303 in AFDC + \$295 in food stamps + \$362 in insurance [est. from state employee family coverage total premium] + \$73 in FICA + \$300 in subsidized child care. Federal income taxes are not included because the family will qualify for an Earned Income Tax credit.) Or, simply stated, an AFDC recipient like the one referred to earlier would have to earn at least \$15,996 or more before getting off AFDC would be worthwhile from a financial standpoint.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the questions addressed in the TaxWatch report are the very same issues being raised in today’s debate. Although the recommendations and conclusions are those of Florida TaxWatch and are not necessarily endorsed by the Commission, we share them to illustrate the issues related to welfare reform, as well as the common themes and issues.

*Florida’s AFDC Program: The Facts and the Fears, March 1994*, published by Florida TaxWatch, Inc. offered the following information in relation to commonly asked questions about AFDC in Florida.

- Has AFDC become a “lifestyle” instead of an economic “safety net” as intended?
- Are new residents to Florida and teenagers accounting for much of Florida’s AFDC caseload growth?
- Does the nature of AFDC policy influence women in poverty to have more children and, thereby, act as an incentive to public dependency?
- Are most AFDC mothers able to work, but choose not to work?

Conclusions from the TaxWatch Analysis are summarized below.

- Time limitations for eligibility periods of two years have no relationship to caseload characteristics and current policy for employment requirements.
- Very few of the adults in AFDC families are disabled and only 40 percent of the recipients include children under the age of 3. Significant proportions of the caseload—even when considered in accordance with length of time on assistance—are eligible to seek employment under current AFDC policy. For instance, 45 percent of the cases receiving AFDC for one year or less are currently required to seek employment.
- Florida TaxWatch questioned the reasoning behind the policy that exempts able-bodied AFDC parents from seeking employment when they have children under the age of 3. The policy leads to a perpetuation of dependency among the poor and adds to the level of frustration the working public has with the welfare system. Such a policy is not consistent with general societal trends. For instance, a recent survey found that more than half of the mothers with

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<sup>1</sup> These figures assume people receive all of the benefits for which they are eligible. That is often not the case because of fund-shortages.

children under the age of 1 were employed and almost 2/3 of the mothers with preschool children were employed. This policy further isolates welfare recipients as a "special class."

- A more meaningful criterion for AFDC time limitations should be based upon the average time required by Project Independence to provide the necessary educational and vocational experience for recipients to become job-ready. Project Independence, although not fully proven effective, is a more reasonable barometer to establish AFDC eligibility time limitations.
- By itself, the relatively low AFDC payment standard does not appear to offer incentives for persons to choose welfare as a lifestyle. However, when the associated benefits are factored into the consideration, an annual benefit amount of almost \$16,000 (AFDC + food stamps + Medicaid + subsidized child care) for a family of three becomes more attractive, especially when considering the alternative level of compensation typically available for the under-educated potential labor force on public assistance.
- Without care coverage and an infusion of significant revenue for Project Independence and subsidized child care, welfare reform (seeking to reduce both the number of families on AFDC and the length of time they receive assistance) will not be successful. In addition, Florida's current labor market simply does not have a sufficient supply of entry-level jobs compensated at levels high enough to exceed the threshold of benefits currently available to AFDC families. Economic development also is essential for successful welfare reform.
- Simply stated, welfare reform will cost more than the current fiscal obligation for AFDC and real savings will not be realized until some indeterminate point in the future. However, it is unconscionable to continue to fund and to promote an alleged "helping" program that in reality institutionalizes dependency for too many AFDC recipients.<sup>2</sup>

**Project Independence** is Florida's version of the current federal-state Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program. The following is excerpted from a report based on a five-year study conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) and funded by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The report is entitled *Florida's Project Independence: Benefits, Costs, and Two-Year Impacts of Florida's JOBS Program, April 1995*.

As stated by Judith M. Gueron, President of MDRC:

*"The results point to both the strengths and limitations of the Project Independence approach, a relatively low-cost one focused on getting people into jobs quickly. They also speak to the challenge of implementing programs in a period when caseloads grow as economic conditions worsen. The study shows that Project Independence modestly increased welfare recipients' employment and earnings and reduced their reliance on welfare. Moreover, it accomplished this at no net cost to taxpayers, an unusual achievement for a government program.*

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2 The Family Transition Program was not yet in effect at the writing of the TaxWatch report. To obtain a copy of the full report, please write: Florida TaxWatch Inc., 1114 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32302.

*"Project Independence was most successful in increasing people's earnings when it was implemented as intended; success was sharply reduced (particularly for women with young children) when welfare caseloads rose and child care and other resources became stretched. Given the fiscal pressures states currently face, and may confront even more starkly in the future, these results provide a timely warning about the risks of attenuating a program's services to the point where they fall below a threshold level where they can be effective. The benefit-cost results challenge administrators to confront the difficult task of reducing dependency among women with very young children. Project Independence was clearly cost-effective for women with school-age children, saving taxpayers (over 5 years) more than \$1.50 for every dollar spent on the program. But, for women with younger children (for whom child care outlays were higher and the program's achievements smaller), taxpayers lost money and welfare families had less income. With the welfare debate in Florida and the nation focused on reducing long-term dependency, the present results suggest the difficulty of achieving lasting effects for mothers of young children.*

*"At a time when the public is demanding that government use resources efficiently, it is impressive that Project Independence more than repaid the public's investment. But, the large number of people remaining on welfare, despite participating in the program, suggests the clear challenge to states interested in imposing some form of time limit on welfare after which people would have to work or might receive no further support."*

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's Executive Summary on Florida's Project Independence states:

*"Nearly all national welfare reform initiatives since 1971 have called on states to implement a quid pro quo arrangement between welfare recipients and the agencies that provide financial assistance for poor families. With varying degrees of enforcement and coverage, welfare recipients have been required to take concrete steps toward self-sufficiency while government funded programs provide them with support and opportunities to find jobs and leave the rolls. In 1988, the U.S. Congress passed the Family Support Act (FSA), dramatically expanding the scope of the obligations of welfare families and the government. As the centerpiece of FSA, the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program provided new federal matching funds for state welfare-to-work initiatives aimed at increasing the employment and self-sufficiency of applicants to and recipients of AFDC, the major federal and state cash welfare program. To bolster this additional investment, JOBS extended the mandates to AFDC applicants and recipients with children as young as three years old (one year old, at state option) and strengthened the rules requiring all participants to take jobs or engage in activities leading to employment. However, it left the state with considerable flexibility to design service delivery strategies and to set priorities for the level and emphasis of their investment in JOBS.*

*"Project Independence is Florida's JOBS program. In creating Project Independence, the Florida Employment Opportunity Act of 1987, and the minor modifications that brought the program into compliance with FSA in 1988, adopted a broad-coverage and relatively low-cost approach to implementing JOBS. Participation requirements cover all of the state's single parents (the vast majority of them women) with children age three or older who apply for or receive AFDC and are not otherwise exempt. In an effort to stretch available resources over its full mandatory caseload, Project Independence emphasized relatively low-cost, inde-*

*pendent job search services for the majority of its participants and reserved its more expensive education and training services for those considered least able to find work on their own."*

**WHAT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES ARE OFFERED TO PARTICIPANTS?**

**EDUCATION** — PROVIDES FOR GED, REMEDIAL EDUCATION, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, FINANCING THROUGH PELL GRANTS OR SIMILAR SUBSIDIES (IF UNAVAILABLE FEES ARE WAIVED FOR PROJECT INDEPENDENCE PARTICIPANTS). ENHANCED PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY DEVELOPED FOR JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE PROVIDED THROUGH CONTRACTED SERVICES. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGES, LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs), AND VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.

**JOB READINESS ACTIVITIES** — PROVIDES JOB-SEEKING AND JOB MAINTENANCE SKILLS, JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT HELP PREPARE PARTICIPANTS FOR WORK, INCLUDING WORKPLACE EXPECTATION, WORK BEHAVIOR, AND ATTITUDE MODIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO COMPETE IN THE LABOR MARKET. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PROJECT INDEPENDENCE, JTPA, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, LEAs, AND STATE UNIVERSITIES.

**JOB SEARCH** — PROVIDES INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP JOB SEARCH WHICH INCLUDE SUPERVISED AND UNSUPERVISED JOB SEARCH. JOB-SEEKING SKILLS TRAINING, COUNSELING, AND INFORMATION ON PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PROJECT INDEPENDENCE CASE MANAGERS.

**JOB SKILLS TRAINING** — PROVIDES VOCATIONAL AND SKILLS TRAINING IN SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONAL AREAS. SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, JTPA, AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION.

**CASE MANAGEMENT** — PROVIDES ASSESSMENT, EMPLOYABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT SERVICES, AND FOLLOW-UP. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PROJECT INDEPENDENCE.

**JOB DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT** — PROVIDES LOCATION OF TRAINING EXPERIENCES AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS. PROMOTES THE PROJECT INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS AS A POOL OF INDIVIDUALS QUALIFIED FOR WORK. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY JOBS AND BENEFITS OFFICES, JTPA, AND PROJECT INDEPENDENCE.

**COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCE** — PROVIDES FOR AN UNSALARIED JOB-TRAINING EXPERIENCE AT A WELL-SUPERVISED SITE. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, JTPA, AND PROJECT INDEPENDENCE.

**ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING** — PROVIDES A COMPONENT WHEREBY THE PARTICIPANT IS HIRED BY AN EMPLOYER AND A PORTION OF THE WAGE IS SUBSIDIZED. THE EMPLOYER PROVIDES SUPERVISION AND TRAINING TO BRING THE PARTICIPANTS' JOB SKILLS TO AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY JTPA, PROJECT INDEPENDENCE, PRIVATE BUSINESSES, PRIVATE/NON-PROFIT AGENCIES, AND STATE/LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

**WORK SUPPLEMENTATION** — PROVIDES A NON-PAID WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM FOR AFDC RECIPIENTS AS A JOB READINESS ACTIVITY. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PROJECT INDEPENDENCE, JTPA, PRIVATE EMPLOYERS, PRIVATE/NON-PROFIT AGENCIES, AND STATE/LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

**\*NOTE:** PROJECT INDEPENDENCE PROVIDES CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO ARRANGE AND MONITOR THE PROVISION OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS.

**WHAT SUPPORT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WHILE PARTICIPATING IN PI?**

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND BASIC SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM (JOBS)**

**CHILD CARE** — CHILD CARE NECESSARY FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IS PROVIDED WHEN FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE. WHEN A PARTICIPANT BECOMES EMPLOYED, TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE IS AVAILABLE OR UP TO ONE YEAR AFTER ELIGIBILITY FOR AFDC ENDS. HRS PAYS FOR CHILD CARE UNDER A CONTRACT ARRANGEMENT WITH LOCAL CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

**TRANSPORTATION** — TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED USING A VARIETY OF METHODS INCLUDING CASH (IMPREST FUNDS), TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PROVIDER, AND BUS TOKENS. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PI CASE MANAGERS OR CONTRACTED SERVICE PROVIDERS.

**TUITION** — PROVIDED PRIMARILY BY DOE THROUGH THE USE OF PELL GRANTS AND FEE WAIVERS.

**BOOKS** — PROVIDED FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES THROUGH PELL GRANT FUNDS OR PI FUNDS.

**OTHER WORK RELATED EXPENSES** — ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE FUNDS MAY BE EXPENDED TO PROVIDE OTHER WORK RELATED ITEMS SUCH AS UNIFORMS, TOOLS, AND TESTING FEES. THESE SERVICES ARE PRIMARILY PROVIDED BY THE PI CASE MANAGER USING PI FUNDS.

**FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM (FSET)**

**DEPENDENT CARE** — EXPENSES FOR THE CARE OF DEPENDENTS WHILE AN INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAM MAY BE REIMBURSED FOR THOSE MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY HRS IN THE FORM OF A REIMBURSEMENT WARRANT.



**TRANSPORTATION — EXPENSES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION NECESSARY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM MAY BE REIMBURSED FOR THOSE MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION. THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY HRS IN THE FORM OF A REIMBURSEMENT WARRANT.**

**\*NOTE: SUPPORT SERVICES ARE ARRANGED AND PROVIDED BY THE PI CASE MANAGER.**

The Executive Summary further states:

*"Results from the Project Independence evaluation were mixed, and the findings reveal both the program's potential and its limitations. Most social programs are conceived primarily as attempts to benefit their participants and not as public investments intended to produce government budget savings. Project Independence was intended to reduce public assistance costs—and it did. In fact, savings were large enough to enable the program to pay for itself. In other words, for every dollar spent on providing services for program group members (i.e., expenditures beyond the cost of alternative services they would have received on their own), the program returned slightly more than one dollar to government budgets from reduced welfare payments and increased tax revenues (because of increased earnings). Although taxpayers broke even, program participants did not do as well. The small earnings increases produced by Project Independence were offset by the larger decreases in AFDC and other welfare payments, producing a net financial loss averaging approximately \$370 per program group member over the five-year period used for the analysis of the program's benefits and costs. However, there were more positive findings for women in the early group with preschool-age children. For this group, the program returned to government budgets \$1.55 per net dollar invested, and program participants experienced a net financial gain.*

*"The findings for Project Independence hold particular importance for JOBS program administrators and policy makers. First, they suggest that there is no hard and fast linkage between accomplishing the goal of containing welfare costs by promoting employment and the goal of increasing family income. Project Independence decreased the time some people spent on welfare and returned enough in welfare savings and increased tax revenues to cover its own cost. Overall, however, the program did not increase long-term earnings enough to make most people better off financially. Second, if the JOBS program's investment in individual participants falls below a threshold level, resources may be insufficient to permit the program to achieve both goals. By enforcing at least a short-term participation requirement for a large share of the mandatory caseload, Project Independence was able to produce welfare savings even under the stress of increasing caseloads and even for women with young children. At its most effective, Project Independence also produced sustained earning increases that offset reductions in welfare received, at least for program participants with no preschool-age children. However, as limitations on child care and case management resources made it increasingly difficult to engage participants intensively, the program's longer-term effect on earnings diminished. The lower threshold of program resources was reached with especially serious financial effects for women with preschool-age children."*

**Family Transition Act** was enacted by the Legislature in 1993. Many of the provisions of this Act were welfare reform recommendations developed by the Study Commission on Employment Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency that was created by the Legislature during the 1992 session.

The FTA authorized the establishment of two demonstration projects, one of which would feature mandatory client participation and the other of which would feature voluntary client participation. Escambia County was selected for the mandatory project site, and Alachua County was selected for the voluntary site.

Waivers of all regulations necessary to implement the two demonstration projects were sought and approved in the following areas:

- establishment of time limits for receipt of AFDC benefits
- higher levels of earned income were allowed in AFDC benefit calculation
- higher assets were permitted without loss of AFDC eligibility
- school attendance was required for all recipients under the age of 18
- preschool children were required to be immunized
- school conferences were required for each child during each grading period
- extended transitional child care benefits were provided

The waivers were granted in January 1994, and the pilot programs were implemented in February 1994. Funding was provided in the FY 1995-96 Appropriations Act for five additional Family Transition Programs.

Evaluation of the Family Transition Program is being conducted by Manpower Demonstration Research Corp. The first of two evaluative reports required by the Family Transition Act was released in August 1995. This "Early Implementation Report" does not assess the impact of FTP in all areas, but it does identify some problems and lessons that can aid in successful program expansion.

Principal findings include:

1. FTP projects have been somewhat successful in changing the welfare "message" from one of income maintenance to one of transition to self-sufficiency.
2. There was lack of clarity for both staff and participants regarding the time-limit policy and, in particular, availability of "transitional" employment after expiration of the time limit.
3. Despite frustration over policy ambiguity, caseload size, start-up delays, and other factors, staff associated with FTP remain supportive of the program.
4. A majority of FTP participants report that the program is changing the nature of their experiences with the welfare system. They report more frequent interaction with FTP staff in which new issues are addressed.

5. Participation data indicate that FTP participants are much more likely than members of the control group to enter education and training activities and to enter more than one type of job-related activity. (This may be due to more reliable and accessible child care.) In comparison with the control group, Escambia FTP participants were:
- almost 3 times as likely to have had a formal assessment (31 compared to 11 percent)
  - twice as likely to have participated in job search (22 to 11 percent)
  - almost 3 times as likely to have participated in education or vocational training (26 to 9 percent)
  - almost twice as likely to have been referred for sanction (19 to 11 percent)
6. The absence of a reliable, automated tracking system that is linked to the FLORIDA System or the Project Independence System has made client monitoring, tracking, and reporting somewhat problematic.
7. Except for child care, benefit differences between FTP participants and members of the control group appear to be nominal. Analysis of benefits between May 1994 and April 1995 reflects the following differences between the control group and FTP participants.

Type of Benefit	Control	FTP	% Difference
AFDC	\$1,450	\$1,471	1.45
Food Stamps	1,564	1,532	(2.05)
Title IV-A Child Care	153	249	62.75
Other Child Care	49	40	(18.37)
Medicaid	1,334	1,289	(3.37)

# ISSUES IN CURRENT WELFARE DEBATE

## Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting

At the center of the debate around welfare reform is the issue of teen pregnancy. The sixth annual report of the Florida Education and Employment Council for Women and Girls documents the Council's study on teenage pregnancy and parenthood. The report is available through the Department of Education and includes the following:

- a review of relevant research studies and articles
- data on teenage parents in Florida
- the economic costs to taxpayers
- the long-term consequences to teenage mothers and their children
- programs for pregnant and parenting teenagers
- legal issues including school and criminal law issues
- recommendations

According to the Council's research findings:

*"Florida ranked 12th highest in the nation for births to girls ages 15-17 and 17th highest for births to girls ages 18 and 19 in 1992. In 1994, 17,487 live births occurred to teenage mothers in Florida. The number of non-white teenagers in Florida giving birth has declined from 1991 through 1994, while the number of white teenagers in Florida giving birth has risen.*

*"A few characteristics appear to correlate with teenage pregnancy: poverty, low academic/educational achievement, behavioral problems, family history of early childbearing, child and sexual abuse, and lack of motivation and aspirations. Teenage parents face a future of chronic unemployment and reliance on public assistance, greater number of children than older parents, and marital failure. Their children face a lifetime of disadvantages including developmental delays, academic and behavioral problems, social and emotional problems, school dropout, early childbearing, parental neglect, child abuse, abandonment, family instability, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and poor emotional adjustment.*

**"A startling number of children of teenage pregnancies are fathered by adult males. Fathers range from 3.75 years to 9.8 years older than the mothers. Adult men father nearly three-fourths of all births among school-age girls. Two-thirds of the teenagers who give birth provided no information about the father on the birth certificates."**

Some of the issues identified and discussed in the Council's report include the following.

- U.S. teenagers have one of the highest pregnancy rates in the western world; twice as high as England and three times as high as Sweden. Florida's teenage pregnancy rates have risen from 1992 to 1994 and are still among the highest in the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1995), the live birth rate for females aged 15-19 years in Florida has increased by over 10 percent in the 10-year period between 1982 and 1992.

- Teenage mothers are at greater risk for dropping out of school; low educational attainment foreshadows difficulties in the job market. Accordingly, they are more likely to receive public assistance, to become reliant on public assistance, and to end up in poverty. The creation of economic disadvantage—temporary or permanent—results in large measure from high rates of marital disruption and instability often following a teenage birth. Teenage families produce a greater number of children than older parents; an increased number of children is a further disadvantage to teenage parents.

The Council's Report includes a series of recommendations based on their research. The Commission encourages all interested readers to consider these recommendations in the context of welfare reform.

### **Child Support Enforcement<sup>3</sup>** **Carrie Massey, Commission Student Intern**

#### **Policies for Enforcement for AFDC Recipients**

The legal staff for Child Support Enforcement was transferred from the Department of Revenue to the Office of the Attorney General in October 1995. **Note:** This transfer occurred after the writing of this report.

The Child Support Enforcement section represents the Department of Revenue in its efforts to establish and collect child support obligations in the Second Judicial Circuit. This includes the recuperation of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) and non-assistance dollars.

Upon a parent becoming delinquent in his/her payments, there are seven ways for the state to collect money for reimbursement to AFDC.

1. The Child Support Enforcement section may garnish wages (income deduction) as well as unemployment benefits.
2. The Child Support Enforcement section may seek suspension of various licenses issued by governmental agencies to the paying parent.
3. Income tax refunds may be intercepted.
4. Lottery winnings may be intercepted.
5. Reports may be made to credit reporting agencies.
6. Personal property and real estate may be seized and sold.
7. A finding of contempt of court and sanctions which may include jail time of up to 5 months and 29 days.

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<sup>3</sup> This report has been submitted with a journal of personal research and reactions, as well as information provided by the state. It has been included for reference and better understanding of the Child Support Enforcement system in Florida.

## **Procedures for Enforcement for AFDC Recipients**

It is important to consider the following questions.

- Is there an order in which the enforcement policies are pursued?
- Who decides—the case worker, the custodial parent, both together, or the state through a formal procedure?
- Is the threat of jail time used as a measure of last resort?
- How is the money intercepted if the non-custodial parent is receiving payment from a private employer or a business without an established payroll?
- Is there a case worker assigned to the non-custodial delinquent parent for assistance, guidance, and counseling?
- Is there any reward for payment and any effective punishment for non-payment?
- Is the custodial parent required to seek child support enforcement through the state or are there alternatives available?
- What if the custodial parent and the child(ren) are in danger?

The Child Support Enforcement sections under the Department of Revenue are expected to improve their operations with the improvements made to the FLORIDA computer system, which should integrate child support cases and AFDC cases onto one system so the client will not "get lost" in the large pool of welfare recipients. When a person is approved for AFDC, the case is referred for establishment and collection. The case analysts, acting as representatives of the state, decide what type of action will be taken to seek collection.

The main goals of the Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement, are collection and to deal with the economics of each case to the extent possible and practical. Case analysts are responsible for approximately one thousand cases each.

Although the idea is to reward custodial parents who cooperate, the system sabotages the incentive. Because of problems with linking the two systems, it can take 3 ½ to 4 months to get the \$50 if everything goes well. But, if the delinquent parent pays one month and not the following months, the whole 4–6 month process begins again because it must be revised in the computer.

### **Questions for Consideration**

- Should the focus be on the child, not the battle between the parents?
- Should the \$50 disregard fee to custodial parents be increased or abolished?
- Should there be a reform reward program for delinquent parents who pay support?
- To protect the children involved, should the names of delinquent parents be withheld from publication in newspapers or other public forums?
- Does the FLORIDA Computer System need revision?
- Do the case analysts warrant higher pay and/or caseload decrease?

- Would an increase in the personnel base for Child Support Enforcement enable for personal attention to every case?
- Would cooperation from local sheriffs' departments, driver license bureaus, and employers, to act in accordance with the law, improve in the collection of payments?
- Should information be made available to every AFDC recipient regarding child support enforcement measures, policies, and procedures?

Further, the Child Support Enforcement office recognizes that **preventive programs** are the best means of enforcement for child support offenders. The notion that it is acceptable to have children without supporting them must be exposed as shameful and totally unacceptable.

### **Housing** **by Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Commissioner,** **Tampa Housing Authority**

The existing public housing system has become entrenched over more than three generations. What originally was designed to provide temporary shelter for those who suffered the most from the Depression has become a way of life for hundreds of thousands of Floridians. Although certain criteria must be met to be eligible for public housing, once admitted, residents need never leave as long as they pay the rent and follow the rules. Rent is based on a percentage of the total household income; if a resident's income increases, rent increases. Similarly, married residents with two incomes generally will have higher rent. This rent structure often creates harmful disincentives that encourage single-parent homes. Obtaining employment may actually lead to a diminished lifestyle because of a rent increase and possible loss of other benefits.

Life in public housing can be debilitating in other respects. Traditionally, public housing residents have not been free to choose where they wish to live. Units are assigned to them based on strict guidelines dictated by family size and availability of space. Large, dense populations of poor people often become vulnerable to the worst elements of society and many provide the environment where drug dealers and other negative elements congregate.

HUD has recently proposed new models that benefit the residents. Residents may choose their homes. This would create a sense of freedom, rather than entrapment. This choice also will force housing authorities to improve and to maintain the quality of their housing stock in order to be competitive with the private market. For this proposal to succeed, HUD should maintain full modernization subsidies so that housing authorities can bring public housing up to competitive standards. In addition, HUD should allow housing authorities to demolish units not worth refurbishing. HUD should permit authorities to mix low- and moderate-income families. This would provide a desirable economic mix within each community and would lead to a financial balance to sustain the project.

Housing authorities also should be permitted to charge fair market rent, with the tenant-based subsidy going directly to the housing authority for administration (as is done in Section 8 programs). The public housing authority would continue to administer the assistance even if the assisted family moves to a privately owned unit.

If the transition is practical, affordable housing can be preserved while providing more flexibility and choice to those who receive housing subsidies. This model is not without challenges.

"Business as usual" cannot continue at public housing authorities. They must function as private, commercial entities—not political, bureaucratic enclaves. People receiving housing subsidies should be able to choose to live where they can hope to escape the violence and crime so often prevalent in many large housing complexes.

## **Employment**

**by Judy Byrne Riley, Appointee to the Jobs and Education Partnership**

As the federal welfare emphasis shifts, the new goal must be to place people in permanent, unsubsidized jobs and careers. All welfare programs are thus ultimately linked to job training and work force development.

The federal government has a long history of job training for low-income workers. The services involved include more than just educating a person for employment. They also include counseling, assessment, training, and placement services.

Programs scattered throughout government agencies include:

- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs for low-income and unemployed workers
- The Employment Service, a sister program of unemployment insurance
- Pell Grant and other student loan programs
- Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program for welfare recipients

The present plan is to "empower" the states by consolidating programs and shifting a majority of the decision making in their direction. In Congress, the House and Senate each have their own versions of how best to reach that goal. There are, however, some consistencies between the plans:

- job training, work force development programs must be consolidated
- block grants to the states, with a much reduced list of requirements
- involvement of business at the local level
- provision of easy and equal access to services

Not surprisingly, a reduced financial commitment will be a part of the final version sent to the states.

Florida, historically a leader in effective job training, has been positioning itself to take advantage of expected federal changes. The Governor's Office has delineated the guiding principles for a successful work force:

- skills must be upgraded to be competitive in a global marketplace
- federal and state funds must be spent within a coordinated system
- training programs must be designed to meet employer's needs
- success will be defined and rewarded



The state believes that work force training programs must be locally designed and controlled, market driven, multifaceted, and customer focused.

With these principles in mind, the Jobs and Education Partnership (a part of Enterprise Florida) was passed by the Legislature in 1994. The intent was to create a "voluntary, market-driven, performance-based incentive-funding program" within the vocation educational system in Florida. An 18-member board, including representatives of business, labor, education, and the Legislature, has taken the lead in reorganizing the state's work force training to include pertinent federal programs and relevant state vocational and educational programs.

The partnership's stated objectives are:

- provide for a skilled work force within the global market
- respond to changes in technology and emerging industries
- plan funding and programs accordingly
- base evaluation of program success on student and participant outcomes
- coordinate state, federal, local, and private funds for maximum impact

The system features four key elements:

1. A network of one-stop career centers, giving all Floridians easy access to re-employment information, job search consulting, training/education, and temporary financial assistance;
2. An enhanced school-to-work strategy, linking business to the state's educational institutions;
3. Welfare-to-work, limiting welfare by a community-wide effort to get welfare parents into the work force; and
4. High-skill/high-wage jobs, using performance-based incentive funding to train workers for jobs in areas of high demand in the state.

In the final day of 1995, Governor Lawton Chiles signed an executive order delineating these state goals and setting into motion the process of chartering local boards to plan and coordinate those four elements—with an emphasis on training targeted populations, including welfare recipients. The order further established an interagency group designed to assure a streamlined system, without duplication. The welfare-to-work component of the order noted that an interagency office will assemble available child care resources, training resources, tax credits, and on-the-job training programs, with the stated goal of diminishing welfare rolls and increasing employment within the state.

A draft prepared by the Jobs and Education Partnership outlining a work force development strategy states: "Florida has a growing work force challenge. Too many students are not finishing high school. Too many high school graduates have weak job skills. Too many households are dependent on welfare. Too many workers have only low-wage skills. Too many skilled, defense workers are losing their jobs. Too many businesses won't locate or expand here because of an under-skilled work force."

## THE NATIONAL DEBATE

The following summarizes some of the key points of welfare reform bills that have passed both houses of Congress. These bills would do the following.

- End the individual entitlement to Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC) and AFDC related child care.
- Establish a new cash assistance program for needy families with states having flexibility to set the eligibility rules.
- Provide block grant funding at the level of fiscal 1994 federal funding. This will equal roughly a 5 to 10 percent reduction in federal funds for Florida, depending on resolution of differences in the bills. Federal funding will be fixed for 5 years with only slight increases each year over the 1994 level.
- Require very strong work activity, with state penalties for failure to meet participation rates. Require participation in work activity within 24 months and give individual states the option of shorter time periods.
- Limit cash assistance to 60 months, whether or not consecutive. States may adopt a shorter time limit.
- Provide stronger sanctions for failure to comply with work requirements; persons who fraudulently obtain simultaneous benefits in two states are disqualified for 10 years.
- Provide incentive funds to states to reduce illegitimacy.
- Provide for simplified food stamp rules for recipients of cash assistance; gives states the option of converting food stamp funds to a block grant.
- Restrict eligibility for non-citizens, although each bill provides some exceptions.
- Funding limits will take effect on October 1, 1995.
- The House bill would prohibit cash assistance for children born to cash assistance recipients (family cap). The Senate bill makes the family cap a state option.
- The House bill prohibits cash assistance to unwed minors. The Senate bill leaves this optional.

### National-Myth Busters

According to the Office of Government Relations, National Association of Social Workers:

- federal statistics show that, in 1992, two-thirds of all AFDC recipients were children
- the average number of children in an AFDC family has dropped 28 percent since 1969; by 1990, more than 70 percent of all AFDC families had two or fewer children
- 70 percent of all people entering the welfare system leave within two years and 50 percent leave within one year
- 75 percent of all AFDC cases begin with a relationship change, such as divorce or death of a spouse

- ❑ in 1989, approximately 15 percent of the adult female recipients and more than 22 percent of the adult male recipients either were employed or in school while receiving aid
- ❑ in 1991, 38 percent of the families were non-Hispanic white, 39 percent were black, and 17 percent Hispanic
- ❑ inflation-adjusted AFDC benefits have decreased by 45 percent since 1970
- ❑ even when AFDC payments are combined with food stamps, the combined benefit is below the poverty level in every state and below 75 percent of the poverty level in almost four-fifths of the states
- ❑ out-of-wedlock teen births have increased; however, out-of-wedlock births to women in their twenties have increased much faster
- ❑ only 50 percent of unmarried teen mothers go on welfare within three years of the birth of a child
- ❑ approximately 15 percent of AFDC families do not receive food stamps and 63 percent live in private rental housing without housing assistance
- ❑ in 1989, federal expenditures for AFDC amounted to approximately one percent of the federal budget and approximately two percent of the average state's budget

### **What is Florida Doing?**

Florida has been experimenting with welfare reform for a number of years—which is why it is imperative that existing programs be reviewed for their effectiveness. The Florida Senate established a Select Committee on Social Services to review the impact that block grants and changes in federal law will have on Floridians. The select committee also has been charged with developing a proposal for welfare reform to be sent on to the appropriate legislative committees.

In November 1995, the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, in coordination with the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives, convened a Florida Welfare Reform Conference. Conference participants were briefed in a general session on both the status of national welfare reform and the impact of welfare reform on Florida. Participants were then assigned to small groups that met individually to discuss nine critical issues in welfare reform. Participants reconvened twice to report on small-group discussions.

Several common messages or themes emerged during the conference. Most of them are consistent with issues raised in other forums. They were reported as follows.

1. Getting people back to work is the #1 priority.
2. Assess the whole family—Florida should develop programs that allow for more flexibility to meet needs.
3. The process of applying for and receiving welfare should instill expectations, obligations, and responsibilities in recipients.
4. Preserve families.
5. Treat two-parent families the same as single-parent families.

6. Child care should not be a separate issue; care for children should be a priority.
7. The welfare system should emulate the norm for corporate America.
8. If work is not available, recipients should be assigned to community work.
9. Set limits on money and length of time that benefits can be received.
10. Promote prevention.
11. Keep statewide standards and equity of payments, but allow some local options.
12. If welfare demands exceed resources, Florida should reduce benefits to balance the program's budget (minority report—raise the revenue to meet the needs).
13. Florida should do a better job of preparing children to assume responsibilities as an adult.
14. Establishment of a "rainy day fund" for Florida's welfare program was suggested.
15. Reduce fraudulent use of the welfare program.
16. Restrict cash benefits for children born to minors out of wedlock and for additional children of families already receiving assistance. This drew controversy during the conference and reflected no clear majority.
17. The restriction of cash benefits to legal non-citizens also did not emerge with any clear majority opinion.<sup>4</sup>

### **How is Florida Doing?**

- Ranks 48th in high school graduation rates
- From 1980 to 1991, the wages of full-time workers over the age of 25 who had graduated from college rose nine percent, but earnings for workers who had completed only high school dropped by seven percent
- Military base closings and defense spending cuts will dislocate 30,000 workers and future cuts may leave more than 100,000 looking for jobs
- In 1970, only 11 percent of the unemployed were out of work for six months or longer; in 1992, 21 percent of the unemployed had not found suitable work in six months
- According to Florida Trend Magazine, Florida will not face any work force shortages in the coming years, but still is viewed as having a relatively low-skilled work force

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<sup>4</sup> Approximately 180 individuals participated in the conference. Most were professionals representing an agency, organization, or policymaker. Recipients were not included in the conference.

This is the current situation in which some 200,000 women receiving AFDC will be infused. A lot of emphasis is being placed on economic development with a focus on high-skill/high-wage jobs. However, the three leading industries in Florida at the present time are all low-wage, no-benefit industries: tourism, agriculture, and retail. Even as new industries are courted, these industries are not likely to go away. This reality must be addressed in the current debate on welfare reform.

If all work is to be valued, then it becomes important to support people who are employed at minimum and low-wage jobs. To accomplish this objective, policies should be designed so that entry-level and service occupation jobs provide families with a better situation than ongoing welfare. This could be done through an earned income wage supplement, changed food stamp eligibility, subsidized child care, and transitional medical coverage. It is not enough to say "get a job" when many people work full time and still live below the poverty level.

## RESOURCES

1. Public hearings conducted by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women on welfare reform; in Apopka, Florida, December 1995, and in Dade City, Florida in December 1994.
2. "Florida's AFDC Program: The Facts and the Fears," Florida TaxWatch, March 1994.
3. "Florida's Project Independence: Benefits, Costs, and Two-Year Impacts of Florida's JOBS Program," April 1995.
4. 1995 Annual Report of the Florida Education and Employment Council for Women and Girls—"Impact of Teenage Pregnancy in Florida: Issues, Implications, and Recommendations for Prevention and Intervention."
5. Office of Government Relations, National Association of Social Workers, "Welfare Reform: Myth Busters," March 1, 1994.
6. "Welfare Is Not for Women: Why the War on Poverty Cannot Conquer the Feminization of Poverty," by Diana Pearce. Article appears in *Women, the State, and Welfare*, edited by Linda Gordon, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.
7. Women's Network for Change, Action Alert, "Get the Facts; Working Families Deserve a Break," March 28, 1996.
8. "Research-in-Brief Welfare that Works: The Working Lives of AFDC Recipients," prepared by The Institute for Women's Policy Research, August 1994.
9. Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services Economic Services Program Office.
10. Florida House of Representatives Appropriations Committee; "Fiscal Facts 1994-1995" (AFDC Charts).
11. Select Committee on Social Services, The Florida Senate, October 24, 1995.
12. Committee on Aging and Human Services, The Florida House of Representatives.
13. Teresa Dozier, Human Services Program Specialist in Child Support Enforcement.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Sandy Allen, Florida Association of Women Lawyers; Anne Gannon, National Organization for Women; Nikki Beare, Florida Women's Political Caucus; Diana Dawson and Annette Van Howe, Florida Women's Consortium; Trish Hinton, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Pat French, Florida 9 to 5; Kate Gooderham and Honorable Elaine Gordon (ret.), Florida Women's Political Caucus; Jean Bryant, Director of Women Studies/FSU; and Helga Kraft and Pam Vetro, Women's Studies/UF;
- Interns who served during this period and worked very hard on special research projects and reports: Carrie D. Massey/Florida State University, Child Support Enforcement measures available in the State of Florida for AFDC recipients; Nicole Coffin/Florida State University, 1992: The Year of the Woman defining the term to Florida; Carla Swickerath/University of Florida, Florida Women Artists; Kimberly Eckert/University of Florida, Studies of Domestic Violence and injunctions for protection in Alachua County; and Cherri Stratton/Florida State University, Suffrage Movement in Florida.
- Deborah Sims of S.M.I.L.E. Center for Women, Apopka (Single Mothers in a Learning Environment, an organization that helps women learn skills enabling them to find employment), met with FCSW on October 28, 1995, along with community leaders and welfare recipients. Special thanks to Representative Bob Sindler of Apopka, who participated in the hearing.
- Margarita Romo, Director of Farmworkers Self Help, Inc., organized a public hearing at Pasco-Hernando Community College/Dade City Campus on December 17, 1994, and her work is included in this report.

- ❑ **Members of the Welfare Reform Task Force Committee of FCSW, who worked in researching, preparing, and writing this report: Susan Wilson (Chair of the Welfare Reform Task Force Committee), Mona Jain, Mona Reis, Judy Byrne Riley, Marsha Griffin Rydberg, Laura Ward, and especially Karen Woodall. Also, Representative Bob Sindler of Apopka who participated in the public hearing.**
- ❑ **This report was researched and written with the assistance of Linda Vaughn, Linda Vaughn & Associates, Tallahassee. The Florida Commission on the Status of Women thanks Linda for her efforts.**



## Florida Commission on the Status of Women Survey Response Form

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women represents all citizens residing in the State of Florida and is very interested in your opinions regarding issues facing women and families in this state. Your response to this survey will help us to identify key areas of concern and to determine future priorities for the Commission.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:    Male    Female

Race:    Hispanic    White    Native American    African American    Asian

Education:    High School    Some College    College Degree    Some Graduate/Graduate Degree

Age:    16-24    25-34    35-44    45-54    55-64    65+

Are you a resident of Florida?    Yes    No    If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you become aware of the Commission? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a local county or city Commission on the Status of Women?    Yes     No

If yes, please provide the name and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in starting one in your county/city? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of a woman's organization?    Yes    No    If yes, please provide the name and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the five most critical issues you believe are facing women and families in Florida today. For the most critical, place a "1" in the box to the left of the item. For the next most critical, place a "2," and so on. Use the blank lines to write in additional critical issues not listed.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care        | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education          | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Jobs    | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age Discrimination | _____                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Equity         | _____                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment  | _____                                      |

If you would like additional information about the Florida Commission on the Status of Women and/or would like to provide your expertise to the Commission, please call the Commission office at (904) 413-3021, or FAX (904) 921-4131.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey. Your views are very important to us.

**Please detach this sheet from the report and return to: FCSW, Office of the Attorney General, The Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050.**

